
ALABAMA FOREVER WILD LAND TRUST
MANAGEMENT PLAN

Approved: December 7, 2006

Perdido River - Longleaf Hills Tract

PERDIDO RIVER-LONGLEAF HILLS ADDITION – APPROVED FEBRUARY 7,
2008

PERIDIO RIVER WMA-SWIFT ADDITION – APPROVED SEPTEMEBER 20,
2012

TO BE UTILIZED AS A
NATURE PRESERVE, RECREATION AREA, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
Baldwin County

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Acquisition objectives. Amendment 543 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901 established the Forever Wild Land Trust to help meet the State's outdoor recreation needs and protect the natural heritage of the state. The objectives are to:

- (a) Protect, manage, and enhance certain lands and waters of Alabama with full recognition that this generation is a trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; and
- (b) Protect, to the fullest extent practicable, recreational lands and areas of unique ecological, biological and geological importance; and
- (c) Promote a proper balance among population growth, economic development, environmental protection, and ecological diversity.

The Forever Wild Law specifies that the Board shall develop management and

allowable use guidelines which shall be followed by the Department in the administration and stewardship of acquired properties. The State Lands Division has the responsibility of coordinating management. All lands must be managed under the multiple-use management principle to insure that all resource values including recreation, hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, aesthetics, soil, water, forest management and minerals are protected and enhanced. All uses of the tracts must be compatible with the primary purpose for acquiring the land. The right of the public to hunt and fish on the land may not be abridged or restricted, subject to such rules, regulations, seasons and limits as are established by the Department.

II. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

A. The Perdido River - Longleaf Hills tract lies in Baldwin County approximately 18 miles southeast of Bay Minette. The tract is located between Highway 112 and the Perdido River near the small community of Gateswood.

B. The tract's total acreage is approximately 3,988 acres. The State Lands Division secured a \$1.9 million grant from the Forest Legacy Program, administered through the Alabama Forestry Commission, which comprises 1,678 acres of the total acreage. The Forever Wild Land Trust acquired the remaining 2,310 acres.

C. A legal description of the property is included in the plan as exhibit A. Maps of the property are included in the plan as exhibit B.

D. No permanent improvements are known to be present on the property.

E. The tract is located in the Southern Pine Plains and Hills section of the Southeastern Plains Physiographic Ecoregion. The property is underlain by soils of the Pleistocene, Pliocene and Holocene Series. Soils are comprised of weathered fine to coarse sands that are moderately reddish orange and brown. Limonite pebbles and lenses of limonite cemented sand occur locally in weathered exposures. Vegetation types are characterized by loblolly pine monoculture uplands with scattered naturally regenerating longleaf pines and associated bayhead drains. Slash pine and Atlantic white-cedar border the Perdido River's banks.

III. TRACT MANAGEMENT GOALS

The plan encompasses a planning period of twenty years, with scheduled reviews and updates on a five-year cycle. The plan will also be reviewed and updated within six months of any major catastrophic event which impacts the tract, such as a devastating wildfire, hurricanes, etc.

The goals of management are:

(1) to provide immediate consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities to the public as the tract will accommodate, consistent with the protection of the resource;

(2) to inventory, manage, enhance and protect the biodiversity of the natural communities now on the property and those which may naturally succeed the existing communities by managing for existing communities, particularly sensitive populations, which exist within the Perdido Hills- Longleaf Hills Tract;

(3) to provide opportunities for academic research, field studies and ecological education and on the property;

(4) to acquire and utilize information on the public recreation demand for use of the tract and formulate measures to accommodate the demand while providing full protection of the resource;

(5) to continue to solicit, review and evaluate comments, and recommend long-term management strategies for the above goals.

Management of the tract, consistent with the Nature Preserve, Recreation Area, and Wildlife Management Area Forever Wild categories includes immediate tract security (protection of boundaries, marked property lines, security gates, evaluation of road use and maintenance and periodic review of tax records); immediate protection and maintenance of sensitive species and community types; future provision of educational opportunities (evaluation of seasonal field studies or ecological tours); provision of recreational opportunities (i.e., wildlife viewing, public hunting, canoe trails, walking trails...).

IV. AGENCY DESIGNATION

Pursuant to section nine (9) of the Forever Wild Constitutional Amendment, the State Lands Division shall coordinate management of the tract pursuant to a Forever Wild tract management plan. The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division shall manage wildlife and fisheries programs including the enforcement of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Regulations for hunting and fishing on the tract. The State Lands Division shall manage natural areas, recreation and other activities and programs relating to the tract.

V. AGENCY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Tract Protection

The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Divisions shall have primary responsibility for tract security.

2. Tract Access

The primary public access will be via Yarborough Road off State Highway 112 near the Gateswood Community.

The public's vehicular access to the tract shall be limited to that provided via the public roads leading to the property and interior roads open to four wheel vehicles. No off-road (or off -trail) vehicular travel, either motorized or non-motorized, shall be provided to the public.

A parking area at the end of the above mentioned road shall be established as a central access point to the interior and peripheral portions of the property.

Foot traffic is encouraged.

3. Hunting and Fishing

The tract is open to public hunting as a new Wildlife Management Area, Perdido River Wildlife Management Area. Detailed descriptions of permitted hunting related activities are described in the annual production of the Perdido River Wildlife Management Area Permit.

No portion of the tract shall be made available for exclusive or private hunting or fishing.

Fishing shall be permitted within inland water-bodies in accordance with regulations specified by the Fisheries Section of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

4. Trapping

Trapping will be allowed through seasons and means as designated by the Wildlife Management Area Permit.

5. Camping

No private campsites shall be permitted on the tract. Public over-night camping shall be allowed at designated campsites only. Suggested areas to be designated for public overnight camping will be evaluated with the intent of providing such areas in the future.

6. Boating

The Marine Police Division will be responsible for the continuing enforcement of Alabama Boating Regulations respective to the operation of watercraft on public waters adjacent to the tract.

Pursuant to State Lands Division regulations, boats or other marine vessels may not be permanently moored on public waters adjacent to or within the tract. No houseboat mooring or tie-ups will be permitted for any period of time.

7. Additional Non-consumptive Recreation

Interim opportunities for additional non-consumptive recreational

activities (e.g., birding/ecology tours, canoe tours, hiking, etc.) will be seasonally available on a limited basis. Long-term opportunities will be assessed, such that no conflict exists between the management of activities as a Nature Preserve, Recreation Area, and Wildlife Management Area.

8. Inventory of flora, fauna, communities

An inventory of the flora, fauna and biological communities on the property shall be conducted by the State Lands Division's Natural Heritage Section. Additional survey information may be incorporated as a part of the State of Alabama's university biology, wildlife and ecology class projects (or other schools requesting permission to conduct field studies on the tract). As information becomes available it shall be made available to the public through documents prepared for such purpose.

Assistance from other state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will be solicited and incorporated into the biological database as appropriate.

9. Natural area protection

The entire tract shall be managed as a nature preserve. The land shall serve as refuge for species endemic to the tract's associated natural communities. The Natural Heritage Section shall coordinate with neighboring federal, state, and other natural resource affiliations to evaluate opportunities for the tract's management plan to embrace the management objectives integral to the conservation of longleaf pine habitats. The Natural Heritage Section shall keep the Forever Wild Board apprized of these cooperative management opportunities.

10. Interpretive program

Interim interpretive material for the tracts will be developed and made available to the public. A location map for the tracts will be prepared and distributed. Public educational presentations will be developed and presented during seasonal periods, allowing the public to access information on recreational resources and gain an appreciation for the wetland communities. Information about these presentations will be made available through local conservation officials, conservation

organizations, as well as resource professionals at local schools.

11. Signs

Multiple signs will be erected on the property to provide information to the public. The information shall include a map of the property, and rules for use of the property.

Signs will be posted along property lines to identify the property and its boundaries.

12. Trash

The public will be encouraged to appropriately dispose of all trash that they may generate while on the property and to remove other trash that they may encounter.

13. Vandalism, nuisances, illegal activities

Law enforcement will be provided by local law enforcement agencies as needed, as well as routine monitoring by Division of Wildlife and Freshwater and State Lands Division Officers. The public will be encouraged to report any vandalism, game violation, nuisances or other illegal activities to the appropriate authorities. Public awareness of and involvement in the property will be promoted through the media.

14. Mowing, Gating, and Road Maintenance

Occasional mowing will be performed along roads within the Perdido River Longleaf Hills Tract.

Existing gates will be evaluated for integrity and life expectancy, and closure necessary for the security of the area and protection of existing roads. Strategic areas will also be identified and evaluated for security of additional roads within the Perdido River - Longleaf Hills Tract. A common lock will be acquired and placed by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Divisions, and keys provided to all appropriate management and law enforcement personnel.

Immediate security of the gates will be coordinated by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Divisions, and the equipment

operators currently working on the utility right-of-way. Following completion of this work, the gates will remain locked at all times except those specified for operation of the tracts as Wildlife Management Areas.

Immediate road maintenance within portions of the Perdido River - Longleaf Hills Tract will be assisted by the respective utility companies servicing their right-of-way. Additional roads will be evaluated, and a schedule devised for future up-keep.

15. Site Restoration

Natural communities and habitats within the Perdido River - Longleaf Hills Tract will be assessed for restoration options. Specific emphasis will be placed on restoration of the longleaf pine forest community existing on the upland portion of the tract.

A forest management plan will be prepared and implemented over the next five years, describing forest/stand resources and the appropriate management strategies necessary in managing these resources in a manner consistent with other objectives described within this document. Preparation of the plan will be a collaborative effort performed by the State Lands Division, the Alabama Forestry Commission, and the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries personnel, as appropriate.

16. Research Requests

Requests for access to the tract for scientific research shall be evaluated individually and cumulatively by the Natural Heritage Section to minimize such activities from disturbing the integrity of the tract as a nature preserve. Alternative sites will be reviewed with the agency or individuals requesting access and follow-up investigations directed at the impacts of the research studies may be required when warranted. Any individuals conducting research on the Perdido River - Longleaf Hills shall be required to submit an annual report of their observations and findings to the Natural Heritage Section for addition to the Lands Division's database.

The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division will also review research

requests, to insure that researchers are compliant with their scientific collecting permits and guidelines.

17. Recreational Safety Plan

A Emergency Action Plan (EAP) will be developed prior to the opening of recreational trails on the tract. This EAP will address possible emergencies that could occur as the public utilizes the tract's trail system (e.g., lost children, hunting accidents, first aid and medical emergencies, arson or lightning strike caused fires, floods...). Development of the EAP will solicit and incorporate comments from the local municipalities, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and Marine Resources Division personnel, local Search and Rescue, AFC, as well as local law enforcement.

VI. TASK STATEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The State Lands Division shall coordinate management plan review, develop task statements as required and report to the Board at the following intervals:

1. July 1, 2006
2. July 1, 2009
3. July 1, 2011
4. July 1, 2013
5. Thereafter at intervals specified by the Board

There will be no direct cost related to this task.

Tasks The following tasks are numbered in relation to the agency management objective identified in Section V. of this plan.

Task 1-a. Property lines will be marked. Property line maintenance will be

performed on a routine basis by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Divisions.

External property line markings shall be refreshed on a three year cycle by the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and State Lands Division, given the frequent flooding of the tracts. In the event of an unforeseen disruptive event such as wild fire or extensive wind throw of timber, the lines shall be refreshed as soon as practical. Property corners shall be maintained on an as-needed basis by the Lands Division in accordance with the following schedule:

1. September 1, 2006 - property line refresh and property corner inspection.
2. September 1, 2008
3. September 1, 2011
4. September 1, 2014
5. September 1, 2017
6. September 1, 2020
7. September 1, 2023

Task 1-b. County ad valorem tax assessments shall be monitored annually by the Lands Division to insure that there are no double or conflicting claims to the property.

There is no direct cost associated with this task.

Task 1-c. The Lands Division shall conduct routine inspection of the tract monthly in conjunction with inspection of other lands managed by the Division.

Task 1-d. Boundary line signs shall be acquired from an appropriate vendor depending on price and quality. The signs shall be posted by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Division along all boundary lines at an appropriate interval, and at other points deemed appropriate by the Division such as right-of-way crossings and along public roads.

The signs will be on a metal blank and will identify the property as “Forever Wild”, and as a Wildlife Management Area.

Task 2-a. A list of launch sites will be made available along with other tract

material.

Task 2-b. Gates and roads within the Perdido River-Longleaf Hills Tract will be maintained cooperatively by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and the State Lands Division, along with utility company personnel.

Task 3 & 4. Regulations will be drafted and prepared by Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division with coordination through State Lands. Enforcement of Department of Conservation and Natural Resource regulations related to fish and wildlife management will be the responsibility of the Department's Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, with assistance from the State Lands Division.

Task 5. Camping opportunities will be assessed and implemented as appropriate, by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Divisions.

Task 6-a. The Marine Police Division will be responsible for the enforcement of Alabama Boating Regulations within the public waters adjacent to the two tracts. The State Lands Division will develop appropriate regulations to effect the provisions of this.

Task 6-b. The State Lands and Marine Police Divisions will be responsible for the enforcement of regulations specific to the tie-up and mooring of marine vessels.

Task 7-a. The State Lands Division will coordinate the evaluation of non-consumptive recreational activities on the tract, through public comment periods over the course of the next year. This evaluation will include review by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division.

Task 8-a. Inventory procedures will be initiated immediately. To facilitate the long term monitoring of the tract's flora and fauna, the Natural Heritage Section will proceed with regular quantitative sampling during the first year of this process. Sampling stations will be established in each of the property's distinct habitats. Following the first year of sampling, quantitative data will be assessed to evaluate the appropriate periodicity of long term sampling necessary to capture the trends in distribution and abundance of the tract's flora and fauna.

Task 8-b. Any biological specimens retained during the inventory of the tract's flora and fauna will be deposited in a state of Alabama museum of natural history appropriate to the respective specimen. Procedures will follow those outlined by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries collection permit guidelines.

Task 9-a. The tract will be managed concurrently as a Nature Preserve, and all considerations will be made to afford native plants and animals the appropriate management necessary for their prosperity. Such measures will be coordinated by the State Lands Division with assistance from other governmental entities. This evaluation will include review by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division.

Task 10-a. The Lands Division has initiated the development of a location map for the Perdido River-Longleaf Hills Tract. Maps will be available for public dissemination at no cost to the public.

Task 10-b. As interpretive materials regarding the flora, fauna and communities of the tract become available they will be furnished to the public on request.

Task 11-a. Signs shall be erected at the road entrances to the tract. Signs will document the necessary information about the tract:

Task 11-b. Boundary line signs will be provided in accordance with task 1-d.

Task 12. Signs will encourage visitors to be responsible with their trash, and to encourage them to remove trash left by others. Illegally dumped trash will be addressed as necessary by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Divisions

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Task 13a. Law Enforcement Officers from the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and the State Lands Division will have principal responsibility for the management of vandalism, nuisances, and illegal activities.

Task 13b. Law Enforcement Officers from the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and the State Lands Division will work with local community and county law enforcement officers, to make them aware of Departmental

Management policies regarding these tracts, and to request their assistance as necessary.

Task 14a. The State Lands Division will secure a new gate system within the Perdido River-Longleaf Hills Tract, and make keys available to all appropriate personnel. Gate security will be coordinated among these personnel, respective of the management activities which they are overseeing, along with utility company personnel presently using the roads and gates.

Task 14b. Mowing and additional road maintenance will be performed by State Lands Division and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division personnel as necessary, and will incorporate the appropriate assistance from the utility companies currently using these roadbeds.

Task 15a. During the course of the Natural Heritage Section's biological inventory, native resident species absent from the tract but noted as being a component of the present natural communities, will be identified and evaluated for re-introduction to the tract. This evaluation will include review by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division to insure that re-introduction activities are not in conflict with Wildlife Management Area activities.

Should re-introduction be deemed feasible, source populations will be assessed to secure genetic stock appropriate to the tract, as well as compatible to other nearby populations should immigration or emigration take place. All re-introduction projects involving any federally listed threatened and/or endangered species shall undergo the review of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and follow any procedures appropriate under the Endangered Species Act.

Task 15b. Timber stands will be evaluated by State Lands and Alabama Forestry Commission personnel for restoration objectives consistent with the management goals of this plan.

Task 16. All research requests will be made in writing and submitted to the Director of the State Lands Division. Such requests will be reviewed by all appropriate parties within the Conservation Department, insuring that no conflicts exist with ongoing management objectives as pertain to use of the tracts as a Nature Preserve, Recreation Area, and Wildlife Management Area.

VII. BUDGET

Expenditures included herein will be from the Forever Wild Stewardship Fund, the Lands Division and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of the Department.